

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Acting Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health



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UP AND ABOUT: REVITALISATION PUSH BACKS CITY, STATE RECOVERY

The Andrews Labor Government is backing Victoria's jobs recovery with a new investment of more than \$260 million to rejuvenate Melbourne's much-loved CBD and attract visitors to the state from across the nation.

Acting Premier James Merlino and Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula today confirmed the *Victorian Budget 2021/22* would contain a \$107.4 million injection to continue the boom in outdoor dining in the heart of Melbourne, attract events to bring visitors from near and far, and bolster city businesses.

Following the success of the *Melbourne Travel Voucher Scheme*, an allocation of \$7.4 million will provide for a new voucher scheme to entice Melburnians and visitors to support city cafes and restaurants. The City of Melbourne will provide a further \$1 million for the scheme.

Rebates of 20 per cent – from a minimum of \$10 returned to a maximum rebate of \$100 – will be available for spending on dining with the City of Melbourne to open the *CBD Dining Experiences Scheme* in coming weeks.

A \$100 million investment to create the *Melbourne City Revitalisation Fund* will be matched by the City of Melbourne, creating a \$200 million pool to renew city spaces.

The Fund will finance CBD arts and cultural events and support CBD small businesses to recover and thrive as more Victorians return to the city to work, watch sports and enjoy our world-class cafes and restaurants.

The Government and the City of Melbourne created the original \$100 million Melbourne City Recovery Fund, which provided 1,200 grants of up to \$10,000 to businesses to convert spaces for COVIDSafe dining, supported cultural events like Melbourne Fashion Week and Melbourne Music Week and financed streetscape works such as widening footpaths and installing planter boxes.

Attracting tourism dollars from interstate will benefit all parts of Victoria, which is why the Budget will provide \$55 million to Visit Victoria for crucial campaigns to draw visitors to Melbourne and our diverse regions, supporting jobs and local businesses.

This will allow for critical forward planning for the continued return of travellers from across Victoria and Australia before focus shifts to the return of international arrivals when public health conditions permit.

The Government responded swiftly to the effects of the pandemic on tourism, launching a campaign to highlight how everyone could celebrate the best of Victoria from their lounge rooms.

Social media kept the state top of mind, including the narration of the Phillip Island penguin parade by Andrew Cotter that reached more than 350 million people worldwide.

Click for Vic was launched in August 2020, bringing 1,330 Victorian makers and creators to doorsteps across the nation.

The return of intrastate travel was complemented by the *Stay close, go further* campaign, with campaign analysis indicating that 79 per cent of Victorians were likely to travel to regional Victoria in the year ahead.

A national marketing campaign entitled *Visit Melbourne – Get Set* was launched during the Australian Open and has been so successful that it will in the coming weeks be launched in New Zealand.

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Quotes attributable to Acting Premier James Merlino

“Life is returning to the CBD and we’re making sure the recovery continues with support for all of the things that Victorians and visitors love about Melbourne.”

“We’re backing the buzz of our cafes, restaurants and bars – and the people who make their living from them.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula

“Victoria is the events and culture capital of Australia and our natural assets are simply stunning. We’ve got a great story to tell, and we’re telling it far and wide to back our tourism businesses and workers.”

Quotes attributable to City of Melbourne Lord Mayor Cr Sally Capp

“The first phase of the Melbourne City Recovery Fund has been critical to keeping thousands of Melburnians in work, particularly in industries that were hardest hit by the pandemic such as hospitality, events and retail.”

“We know there’s still more to do to support our city’s economic recovery and that’s why this joint fund is so important for local businesses and workers.”